

taxes, demanding labour without wages, and carrying off Christian girls for their *Jiarams*. The laws which affect Christians specially and injuriously are—

1. That the evidence of a Christian is not received against a Mussulman.
2. That if any member of a Christian family becomes a Moslem, he or she becomes entitled to claim the whole property of the "house/" which as often as not consists of two or three families. The apostatising member of a household is usually a girl, who either falls in love with or is carried off by a young Mohammedan, who declares truly or falsely that she has embraced his creed. A good governor is careful in these matters, and in some cases gives the girl only her share of the family property, but a bad governor may at any time carry out the law, or use it as a means for extorting ruinous bribes.<sup>1</sup>

Every Christian man above the age of sixteen pays a poll tax of 3s. annually for exemption from military service, but from this impost the headman of a village, who is at once its tax-gatherer and its spokesman, is

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Labaree, whose experience stretches back for thirty years, writes of the races under Persian rule in the Province of Azerbaijan in the following terms : "The Nestorians and Armenians of Persia in common with their Mohammedan neighbours suffer from the evil forms of society and government which have been bequeathed to them from the earliest dawnings of history. Landlordism in its worst forms bears sway. The poor *rayed* or tenant must pay his landlord one-half or two-thirds of all the produce of his farm. Aside from his poll tax he must pay a tax on his house, his hayfields, and his fruit trees, and on all his stock with the exception of the oxen with which he tills the soil. But this is not all.

He is virtually at the mercy of his Agha, which translated literally means master, a word which most correctly describes the relation of the landlord to his peasants. By law he may require from each of his *rayats* three days of labour without pay. In reality he makes them work for him as much as he sees fit. He helps himself to what he pleases whenever he makes them a visit. He sells them grain and flour above, the market price. He ties them up and beats them for slight offences. And to all this and much else must the poor peasant submit for fear of worse persecutions if he complains. In these respects Moslem, Christian, and Jew suffer alike."